

recognition and admiration for his amazing accomplishments. He warrants our credit for helping to introduce us to this important place.

He has been described by people who knew him well as a "great spirit" and a great man. Those words merely touch the surface, for his spirit and drive to do better is truly immeasurable, as are his remarkable achievements in the area of exploration. I am humbled to salute this great African-American, this great man.

STATEMENT REGARDING ORIGINAL COSPONSORS OF H.R. 3615

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to state that Congressman JERRY MORAN of Kansas was meant to be listed as an original cosponsor of important legislation, H.R. 3615, The Rural Local Broadcast Signal Act, which I introduced on February 10. I have added him as a cosponsor today.

DR. LEONEL VELA IMPROVES HEALTH CARE IN TEXAS

HON. LARRY COMBEST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Leonel Vela, an individual who has contributed tremendously to the improvement of public health and wellness throughout Texas. Dr. Vela has served in many capacities at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock and has significantly advanced health education and research. On March 1, he will complete his work at Texas Tech and begin working with the University of Texas Health Science Center in Harlingen. Dr. Vela will be greatly missed, but his investments at Texas Tech and throughout the state will continue for years to come.

Dr. Vela has dedicated his career to public health in order to improve the lives of individuals who do not have access to proper care. He grew up in Texas; his parents were migrant farm workers. Dr. Vela earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Stanford University. At the Baylor College of Medicine, he earned his doctorate of medicine and later received his master's in public health from Harvard University. Dr. Vela is married to Alicia and has four children.

Through his accomplishments and research, Dr. Vela has proven to be an expert in many areas such as diabetes prevention and treatment, migrant health and wellness, border health care, telemedicine, and women's health issues. He has written a variety of medical publications and made presentations throughout the state on various health topics. In addition, Dr. Vela has actively led in significant public health activities and initiatives. He directed the public health response to the Ebola

Reston outbreak in Texas, co-founded the Rio Grande Valley Diabetes Task Force, developed Community Oriented Primary Care (COPC) in South Texas, and enacted the response to the Dengue Fever outbreak in South Texas. Dr. Vela also supervised the first regional birth defects registry program in Texas, founded the telemedicine mobile unit project to take health care services to rural communities in South Texas, and spearheaded the establishment of the "Women's Center" and the "Diabetes Center of Excellence" at South Texas Hospital.

Dr. Vela has been recognized for his achievements through various awards, fellowships, and appointments. He was one of only three individuals presented with the prestigious Plate of Bounty Award in 1999 by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for his work in migrant health care. Dr. Vela was named the Selected National Institutes of Mental Health/APA Minority Fellow in 1989, and in 1986, he earned the Kellogg Fellowship in Health Policy and Management from Harvard University. Some of Dr. Vela's state and national appointments include the Texas Medical Association, the Governor's Border Working Group Health Subcommittee, the South Texas Health Education Committee, the National Advisory Council on Migrant Health, the TeleHealth Steering Committee for the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board, and the Good Neighbors National Environmental Board established by Congress.

Dr. Vela has displayed dedication to improving public health throughout Texas and has advanced the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. I would like to thank him for his commitment to providing access to health care for thousands of individuals, and I extend my best wishes to him in all of his future endeavors.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

HON. PORTER J. GOSS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, each year approximately 300 students in my congressional district participate in the Model United Nations program. Acting as delegates from one of the United Nations member countries, these young people are afforded the opportunity to learn about that country, its culture and issues important to the nation; hone their research, debating and parliamentary skills; and interact with their peers on topics of international significance. This opens a new world to many of the students; in fact, some of them are inspired to pursue a course of study in international relations as a direct result of their work in the Model UN.

Among the teams from Southwest Florida is one from Port Charlotte High School which has competed at various forums, including Harvard University, and have amassed many awards, both as a team and individually. Following them to Harvard this week for a collegiate Model UN is a team representing Edison Community College. This is the third year that they have been invited to participate with baccalaureate schools.

We wish them luck and salute all of the young people who are devoting time to learning more about international issues.

NETWORKING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2086) to authorize funding for networking and information technology research and development for fiscal years 2000 through 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Morella amendment to authorize networking and information technology research and development funding for the National Institutes of Health.

As Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, the authorizing Committee for biomedical research, it is my great pleasure to join with Mrs. MORELLA to ensure that NIH receive the authorizing authority it needs to push the frontiers of research with powerful new tools. We were happy to work with the gentlelady from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and her capable staff in drafting this amendment, and ask that my colleagues join with me in supporting its adoption.

Thanks to the Republican-controlled Congress, funding for biomedical research through NIH has expanded from \$11.3 billion in FY 1995 to \$17.8 billion in FY 2000. The Morella-Bliley amendment would authorize future funding for NIH high-performance computing applications to examine issues as diverse as new strategies to provide health care access to underserved people through telemedicine, computer modeling of biological processes to substitute for human embryonic stem cells, and the implications of collaborative biomedical research via the Next Generation Internet.

Again, my thanks to the gentlelady from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) for her assistance in accomplishing this initiative. Mr. Speaker, I also submit for the RECORD a letter that I received from the National Institutes of Health requesting our assistance with this authorization.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH,
Bethesda, MD, February 11, 2000.

HON. TOM BLILEY,

Chairman, Committee on Commerce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to request your assistance on behalf of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on a matter of importance to our information technology activities. As you may know, H.R. 2086, the Networking and Information Technology and Research and Development Act of 1999, is pending in the House of Representatives. The inclusion of NIH in certain provisions of the legislation would help advance biomedical research.